

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 8, 10-15, and 18-22 are sought to be amended. Upon entering this amendment, Claims 1-22 are pending in the application, with 1 and 20-22 being the independent claims. No new matter has been entered by these amendments.

Based on the above amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-2, 5-8, 10-11, and 14-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,051,842 to Yamamoto ("Yamamoto"). Claims 3-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,803,991 to Mori ("Mori"). Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,892,573 to Takahashi et al. ("Takahashi"). Claims 12-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,930,757 to Van Der Mast ("Van Der Mast") or U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2003/0081303 to Sandstrom et al. ("Sandstrom"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claim 1 recites at least a radiation distribution device comprising radiation distribution channels that distribute respective portions the radiation from the radiation system to respective patterning devices in a plurality of patterning devices, wherein the respective patterning devices pattern corresponding ones of the respective portions of the beam of radiation.

Claim 20 recites at least detecting intensity of radiation at any of a number of stages in a lithographic projection apparatus when individually controllable elements of each patterning device in a plurality of patterning devices are set to a same state.

Claims 21 and 22 recite at least distributing portions of a beam of radiation from a radiation system through radiation distribution channels of a radiation distribution device to respective patterning devices in a plurality of patterning devices.

None of the applied references, Yamamoto, Mori, Takahashi, Van Der Mast or Sandstrom, either alone or in any combination, teach or suggest using a plurality of patterning devices, where each patterning device receives a respective portion of a beam of radiation via a radiation distribution channel in a radiation distribution device, as now recited in claims 1 and 20-22. In contrast, Yamamoto (e.g., Figures 6 and 7, elements R2 and R3, and related text) and Mori (e.g., Figures 2-4 and 8-13, element 10, and related text) only teach or suggest using a single patterning device, e.g., one reticle, to pattern different portions of a beam at different locations of the single patterning device, while the other applied references only teach or suggest illuminating a patterning device, e.g., a reticle or an SLM, with a single beam. Without such teaching or suggestion of plural plurality of patterning devices, at a minimum, no *prima facie* case has been made.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1 and 20-22. Also, at least based on their dependency from claim 1, claims 2-19 should be allowed.

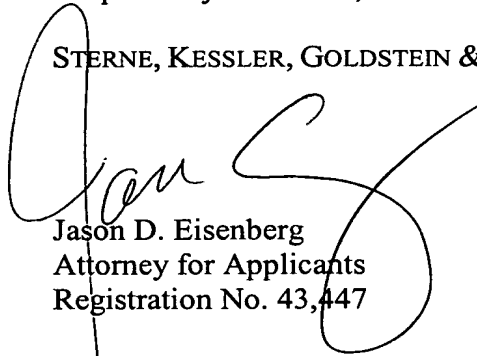
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason S.", is written over the printed name and title of the attorney.

Jason D. Eisenberg
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 43,447

Date: 12/29/05
1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600
SKGF_DC1:469424.1